START
Tri-Party Agreement

PUBLIC NOTICE----REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
200-BP-1 Operable Unit Work Plan

This focus sheet is directed to those who may be interested in reviewing the treatability test plan proposed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for construction of a prototype surface isolation barrier (i.e.; cap) in the 200-BP-1 Operable Unit. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) have regulatory oversight for this project. EPA is the lead regulatory agency for the 200-BP-1 Operable Unit.

The public comment period will begin June 7 and end July 6.

The 216-B-57 crib in the 200-BP-1 Operable Unit is the site selected for the prototype barrier. Construction of the barrier may lead to final closure of the 216-B-57 crib.

All comments will be considered before construction of the prototype barrier begins. It should be noted, the public comment period is being conducted at the same time as the EPA and Ecology review. This process is an effort to speed up the review process as well as inform and involve the public earlier in decision making.

The 200-BP-1 Operable Unit is located in the center of the Hanford Site along the northern boundary of the 200 East Area. The Operable Unit consists of 10 inactive cribs. The cribs received low-level radioactive liquid waste from two sources: U Plant uranium recovery operations (from 1955 to 1956) and waste water from the adjacent 241-BY tank farm (from 1965 to 1974).

The first phase of site characterization for the 200-BP-1 Operable Unit is finished. Characterization activities consisted of collecting and analyzing soil samples from each waste site. The main contaminants of concern in the unit are cesium 137 and strontium 90. Both of these contaminants are bound, or attached very strongly to the soil particles. The majority of the contaminants are 15 to 35 feet underground. The groundwater is approximately 230 feet underground. The likely cleanup action at the 200-BP-1 Operable Unit could involve the use of a surface isolation barrier (cap). Additional performance and construction data is needed to evaluate this alternative.

To date, barrier performance has been evaluated only through laboratory and small-scale field experiments. A large-scale barrier must be constructed to evaluate the fully integrated barrier system. The treatability test plan outlines the general construction, testing, and monitoring activities for the prototype barrier.

The construction of the Hanford prototype barrier is essential in examining its performance and applicability throughout the Hanford Site. The objective of the Hanford barrier is to reduce or eliminate infiltration of water due to precipitation and run on/off water, eliminate animal and plant intrusion that could potentially increase water infiltration and erosion as well as eliminate the uptake of contaminants by plant roots systems, and eliminate the potential for erosion by natural forces (i.e.; wind and water).

The Hanford barrier is designed to exceed the capabilities of the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) cap that has a 30-year design life and is commonly used to cover landfills . USDOE has attempted to design a maintenance-free barrier that will provide protection to the public and the environment for over 1000 years.

Agency Contacts

To review the "Treatability Test Plan for the 200-BP-1 Prototype Surface Barrier", please visit the public information repository nearest to your location.

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For more information or to submit written comments contact Paul Beaver, USEPA, 712 Swift Suite 5, Richland, WA 99352 or phone (509) 376-8665. USDOE and Ecology contacts for the surface isolation test plan are Paul Pak, USDOE (509) 376-4798; Nancy Uziemblo, Ecology (509) 736-3014; or call the Hanford Cleanup toll-free number at 1-800-321-2008.